

# Let's pass a law: Children of govt officials must attend govt schools

A small incident in February 2024...at Namilyango College. I was seated in the office of Tracey, secretary to the head teacher, Mr Constantine Mpuuga Ssajjabbi, awaiting my turn to meet him. My little boy, Rapha, had attended Marigolds Christian School in Kira, Kampala, a wonderful school that offers the Cambridge curriculum — so he had not been available for Senior One selection via the normal route. I wanted him to join my old school.

Presently, Mr Mpuuga's door opened, and his guest emerged, having concluded his business. No sooner had I stood up than a man came rushing and, quite crudely, with a manoeuvre that a rugby player would envy, brushed past me and barged into the HM's office. Taken aback at the complete lack of civility, I looked, speechless, at Tracey.

"He's from the Ministry of Education headquarters," Tracey explained to me, almost apologetically. I've never been one to take offence easily, so the lack of manners didn't bother me one bit. What interested me was that a top officer from the Ministry of Education was at a church school, breaking every rule of etiquette and good conscience, just to get a place for his son, as though there were no government schools to which he could take him.

As this column has warned for years, beware of the cook who will not taste his own soup; beware of the brewer who brews wine but will not drink a drop. They're like Leopold Senghor, former president of Senegal (1960-1980), who wrote epic poetry seriously praising the beauty of a Black African woman, then married Colette Hubert, a White one.

Few contradictions rival Uganda's. Government preaches BUBU (Buy Uganda, Build

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Gawayya Tegulle

Objection



Uganda) with evangelical zeal, yet when reality bites, its officers are the first to betray it. They erect schools they themselves do not trust, then jostle for places in the church-run institutions.

A serious country — a country that values its future — would have a simple, uncompromising law: every government officer must prove his loyalty to the nation by taking his own children to strictly government schools. Let the minister, the permanent secretary, the RDC, the MP, the General — all place their children under the very roofs they claim are "good enough" for other people's children. That alone would reveal, in one afternoon, the truth about their patriotism and the confidence they pretend to have in the State they serve.

You can read the future of any nation by watching its children. Their schools are the country's prophecy. The kind of classrooms they sit in — or fail to sit in — silently announce what tomorrow will be. And you can read the soul of a government by the architecture of its schools. Because a government that cannot imagine a place where children

can learn, grow, stay safe, stay inspired, and be shaped into their God-given potential, is a government that has firmly crippled their future.

When a regime stays in power for 40 years, and the schools bearing its imprint are little more than graves for children's dreams, then that regime is not simply negligent — it is presiding over a slow, methodical genocide: a nation being killed on an instalment plan.

And when a people cannot see this — when they continue to vote for the hand that is starving their children's destiny — then those people are not merely victims. They become accomplices; co-conspirators in the burial of their own future.

A leader who has held power for this long, and yet has built no serious national education system, either has no idea what he is doing, or knows exactly what he is doing — and has chosen doom for the nation anyway. In either case, such a leader has no moral authority to ask for a vote again.

Our leaders preach BUBU by day, but at sunrise they race to enrol their children in church schools, foreign-curriculum schools, international schools — anywhere but the government schools they have starved. The hypocrisy is not merely embarrassing; it is criminal. It is treason against the children of this country. And if President Museveni ever weeps, let him weep for this: that in 40 years of unchallenged power, the schools that bear his government's name are places he would never send his own grandchildren.

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